

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 SCCT-02 AID-20 CCO-00 FBO-08

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NIC-01 NSC-07 SP-03 OC-06

OPR-02 PA-04 USSS-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01

SS-20 SY-04 EB-11 ACDA-19 SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

NSCE-00 SAM-01 SCS-03 DRC-01 /177 W
----- 059125

O R 281540Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0640

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTADELGADA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

DIA

USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PO PINS MILI

SUBJ: POSSIBLE COUP ATTEMPT

REF: LISBON 4181

SITREP 2 AS OF 1530 LOCAL SEPTEMBER 28

1. LISBON REMAINS COMPLETELY CALM WITH NO VISIBLE OUTWARD SIGNS THAT A CRISIS HAS OCCURRED. TRAFFIC IS NORMAL FOR A SATURDAY AFTERNOON AND PUBLIC SERVICES ARE RUNNING. MAIN ROADS INTO LISBON AND IN PARTS OF THE NORTH HAVE CHECKPOINTS WITH ARMY AND NAVY TROOPS, AND/OR
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CIVILIANS FROM THE MDP. CARS ARE BEING SEARCHED FOR WEAPONS AND THEN

ALLOWED TO PROCEED. NO TROOPS ARE VISIBLE IN THE STREETS OTHER THAN AT CHECKPOINTS AND RADIONSTATIONS.

2. OPORTO IS CALM ACCORDING TO OUR CONSUL, WHO REPORTS NO TROOP MOVEMENTS OR VIOLENCE IN THAT CITY. HOWEVER HE REPORTS THAT COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES THERE ARE WHIPPING UP SUPPORT FOR A 1530 LOCAL RALLY TO CELEBRATE THE "VICTORY OF AFM AND DEMOCRATS AGAINST REACTIONARY FORCES". AIRPORT IS FUNCTIONING IN OPORTO BUT INTERNAL FLIGHTS FROM LISBON CANCELLED AT LAST WORD.

3. EMBOFF OBSERVER REPORTS THAT "SILENT MAJORITY" RALLY SCHEDULED FOR 1500 AND BANNED BY ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF HAS, INDEED, NOT RPT NOT TAKEN PLACE. AT THIS TIME THERE IS THIN CROWD OF ABOUT 2000 DISTRIBUTED IN FRONT OF PRESIDENTIAL PALACE--PROBABLY COMPRISED OF PEOPLE WHO DID NOT GET WORD OF BANNING. NO SPECIAL POLICE OR MILITARY PRECAUTIONS ARE IN EVIDENCE AT THE PALACE. A COUNTER-DEMONSTRATION CALLED FOR 1430 IN ALCANTARA SQUARE BY MDP HAS TAKEN PLACE WITH YOUNG AND PEACEFUL CROWD OF ABOUT 1500.

4. ONLY THE EMISSORA NACIONAL RADIO IS BROADCASTING NORMALLY. RADIO CLUBE PORTUGUESA OBSERVED BY EMBOFF TO BE UNDER GUARD BY ARMY AND GNR, AND EMISSORA NACIONAL GUARDED BY ARMY. NO NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT SPINOLA GAVE THE ORDER THAT NONE BE DISTRIBUTED UNTIL MONDAY MORNING, BUT THIS ORDER MAY NOT BE MAINTAINED. DIARIO POLULAR HAS ISSUE READY TO DISBRIBUTE WHICH READS "RIGHTIST COUP SMASHED".

5. WE HAVE VARIOUS REPORTS THAT 200-300 RIGHTIST LEADERS HAVE BEEN PICKED UP. THOSE PERSONS REPORTEDLY ARRESTED (SEE FBIS OKINAWA 281152Z) INCLUDE MOREIRA BAPTISTA (FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER IN CAETANO REGIME) AND GENERAL LUZ CUNHA. OUR SOURCE IN EXPRESSO BELIEVES THAT NO ONE IN PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN DETAINED, AND THAT ALL ARE OLD REGIME PERSONALITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY THE AFM FOR SOME TIME.

6. WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORT FROM REPORTER FOR DIARIO POLULAR THAT ARREST ORDER OUT FOR JUNTA MEMBER GALVAO DE MELO, WHO BEING IDENTIFIED IN MDP HANDOUTS AS LEADER OF REACTIONARY FORCES. ANOTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNCONFIRMED REPORT IS THAT AFM SEIZED TRUCKLOAD OF ARMS NEAR VILA FRANCA DA XIRA THIS MORNING.

7. A PPD LEADER HAS TOLD US THAT HIS PARTY AS WELL AS THE PCP AND PSP HAD BEGUN REMOVING POLITICAL FILES FROM THEIR OFFICES EARLY IN THE MORNING WHEN IT LOOKED LIKE A RIGHTWING COUP MIGHT OCCUR. THEY HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY REPLACED THESE FILES.

8. IT IS STILL UNCLEAR EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT, AND NO OFFICIAL EXPLANATION HAS BEEN ISSUED BY THE GOP. HOWEVER A RELIABLE POLITICAL COMMENTATOR FOR WEEKLY EXPRESSO TOLD EMBOFF THIS MORNING THAT HE BELIEVED PRESIDENT SPINOLA AND HIS SUPPORTERS HAD ATTEMPTED A POWER GRAB AT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS SESSION CALLED UNEXPECTEDLY LATE LAST NIGHT. SOURCE BELIEVES SPINOLA MISCALCULATED DEGREE OF SUPPORT HE ENJOYED BOTH WITH COSTA GOMES AND IN ARMED FORCES, WITH THE RESULT THAT HIS PLANS TO OUST PRIME MINISTER AND LEFTISTS IN CABINET AND AFM WERE THWARTED BY PREEMPTIVE MOVE AFTER CABINET MEETING

BY AFM. SOURCE SAID THAT UNTIL ABOUT 0400 IT APPEARED THAT SPINOLA MIGHT SUCCEED IN HIS ALLEGED PLANS, BUT FOLLOWING AN AFM MEETING WHICH WAS HELD AFTER THE COUNCIL MEETING THE TIDE TURNED AGAINST PRESIDENT. ORDERS WERE GIVEN BY AFM COORDINATING COMMITTEE TO ARREST THOSE RIGHTIST KNOWN TO BE PLANNING TO SEIZE POWER.

9. OUR EXPRESSO INFORMANT BELIEVES THAT COSTA GOMES CAME DOWN FIRMLY ON SIDE OF AFM AND AGAINST RIGHTISTS IN LAST NIGHT'S MANEUVERS. HE STRESSED THAT AS FAR AS HE KNEW NO PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION OF TROOPS TOOK PLACE. IT IS HIS OPINION THAT COSTA GOMES' POSITION HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED AND THAT PRESIDENT SPINOLA WILL REMAIN BUT WITH VASTLY REDUCED POWERS. HE EXPECTS PRO-SPINOLAISTAS IN CABINET WILL BE REPLACED AND THAT GALVAO DE MELO AND OTHER CONSERVATIVES IN JUNTA MAY BE MOVED OUT ALSO. HE FURTHER BELIEVES THAT THE LEFTWING OF THE AFM HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED AND THAT A NUMBER OF RIGHTIST POLITICAL PARTIES SUCH AS THE LIBERAL PARTY, THE PARTIDO DE PROGRESSO, AND PERHAPS THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WILL BE BANNED. THE LIBERAL PARTY IS UNDER ATTACK VERBALLY AND PHYSICALLY BY THE LEFT AS HAVING BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR FINANCING THE PRO-SPINOLA RALLY WHICH WAS TO HAVE OCCURRED TODAY. OUR CONSUL IN OPORTO CONFIRMS A FBIS REPORT THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY HEADQUARTERS THERE HAS BEEN SACKED.

10. PRESIDENT SPINOLA IS SCHEDULED TO SPEAK TO THE NATION AT 1700,
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ALTHOUGH A FBIS BROADCAST (LONDON 281529Z) CASTS DOUBT ON THIS.
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